



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Announces Modifications to Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagic and Reef Fish Charter Vessel/Headboat Permit Renewal and Transfer Requirements Small Entity Compliance Guide

NOAA Fisheries announces a final rule that eliminates the requirement to submit a current Certificate of Inspection from the United States Coast Guard with the application to renew or transfer a federal Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) coastal migratory pelagic and reef fish charter vessel/headboat (for-hire) permit. The rule also prohibits the harvest or possession of coastal migratory pelagic and reef fish species on a vessel with a Gulf for-hire permit that is carrying more passengers than is specified on the face of the Gulf for-hire permit. A permit's passenger capacity currently is based on the Certificate of Inspection when the moratorium permit was first issued. The final rule will be effective August 30, 2013.

Background

Regulations implemented through the Coastal Migratory Pelagic and Reef Fish Fishery Management Plans limit Gulf for-hire permit transfers and renewals to vessels that have the same passenger capacity or a lower passenger capacity. This measure was put in place to limit overall coastal migratory pelagic and reef fish fishing effort by the for-hire sector. However, because NOAA Fisheries can only renew or transfer a permit if the vessel's current Certificate of Inspection is equal to or less than the passenger capacity on the Gulf for-hire permit, this limits the transfer and renewal options for the owner of a permitted vessel.

The new rule will:

- Eliminate the restriction requiring the Certificate of Inspection when transferring for-hire permits.

- Simplify the requirements to renew or transfer a Gulf for-hire permit.
- Maintain the cap on fishing effort for the for-hire sector.
- Allow for-hire vessels to carry more passengers for non-fishing activities if their Certificate of Inspection is greater than the passenger capacity on the face of their Gulf for-hire permit.

Other information

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. This bulletin provides only a summary of the information about the rule. Discrepancies between this bulletin and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

Copies of the final rule are available by contacting NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office at 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701 or by downloading it off the Southeast Regional Office's Web site for reef fish at

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/2013/coi/index.html once it has published.

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